

NEW SERIES VOL. XI

FLORICULTURE

NO. 3

ARNOLD ARBORETUM

HARVARD UNIVERSITY



THE LIBRARY OF THE

BULLETIN

MAY 12 1925

OF

POPULAR INFORMATION

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

JAMAICA PLAIN, MASS.

MAY 5, 1925

Crabapples. The Crabapples when in flower make one of the chief spectacular displays of the year in the Arboretum and only the flowers of the Lilacs attract a larger number of visitors. Many of these plants are covered with buds, a few will flower sparingly or not at all this year, but the general display will be an average one but not as good as that of last year when all the plants were covered with flowers. The collection is arranged on the left-hand side of the Forest Hills Road and at the eastern base of Peter's Hill, a short distance from the gate at the corner of South and Bussey Streets. The oldest and largest plants are near the Forest Hills gate but there are a larger number of species and varieties on Peter's Hill.

The genus *Malus* extends around the northern hemisphere and is best represented in eastern Asia. The North American species are found from the Atlantic to the Pacific and bloom much later than the Asiatic species, and will be discussed in a later Bulletin. The two European or eastern Asiatic species, *Malus pumila* and *M. sylvestris*, are not in the collection although the former is perhaps the most valuable tree in the world as it is the parent of the edible apple. A few of the early Asiatic Crabapples are—

Malus baccata mandshurica, which began to open its flower-buds more than a week ago, is the earliest of the Asiatic plants to flower. It is a native of Manchuria, Korea and northern Japan, and is an eastern form of the better known *M. baccata*, the Siberian Crabapple, which reached Europe more than a century ago and for a long time was one of only two of the Asiatic Crabapples known in European

gardens. *M. baccata mandshurica* as it grows in the Arboretum is a tree twelve or fifteen feet tall and broad; the flowers are pure white, rather more than an inch in diameter and more fragrant than those of any other Asiatic Crabapple. The fruit is round, yellow or red, and not larger than a large pea. The Manchurian Crabapple for the fragrance of the flowers alone should find a place in all collections of these plants. The best Arboretum plant is in the Peter's Hill Group where another form of *M. baccata* (var. *Jackii*) is also growing. This plant was brought from Korea by Professor Jack in 1905 and is distinguished by its larger dark scarlet fruit. Another form of *M. baccata* (var. *gracilis*) raised from seeds collected by Purdom in northern China, promises to be a handsome tree, differing from the ordinary form of *M. baccata* in its gracefully pendent branches, narrower leaves hanging on slender petioles and in the smaller flowers and fruit.

Malus robusta is one of the earliest of the Asiatic Crabapples to flower. It is believed to be a hybrid of *M. baccata* with *M. prunifolia*. In good soil and with sufficient space for free development it will grow into a large shapely tree with a broad, round-topped, irregular head of spreading and often drooping branches. The flowers are fragrant and larger than those of the other Asiatic Crabapples with pure white or occasionally greenish petals. The globose dull red fruit varies greatly in size on different individuals and is rarely more than three-quarters of an inch in diameter. To this hybrid belong many of the trees cultivated for their fruit in cold winters under the general name of the "Siberian Crabs;" of these trees the well known "Red Siberian" is a typical representative. A form of *M. robusta* (var. *persicifolia*) raised from seeds collected by Purdom in northern China, distinct in its narrower peach-like leaves, is now established in the Arboretum and may when better known prove to be worth general cultivation.

Malus micromalus, which is also an early flowering plant, is one of the least known of the Crabapples. It was first sent to Europe from Japan by von Siebold in 1853 under the name of "Kaido," a name which in Japan was given to *M. Halliana*. In Japan *M. micromalus* is known only in gardens, and by Japanese botanists is believed to have been introduced from China and to be a hybrid of *M. baccata* with *M. spectabilis*. The habit of this plant is more pyramidal than that of other Crabapples, and this habit makes it conspicuous in the collection. It first came to the Arboretum from the Paris Museum in 1888 and the plants now growing here are descendants of that plant. It is still one of the rarest of the Asiatic Crabapples in western gardens.

Malus Halliana var. *Parkmanii* is the semidouble form of a Crabapple which Wilson found growing wild in western China on the Tibetan border. As the double-flowered form had long been a favorite in Japanese gardens, where it is frequently cultivated under the name of "Kaido," this tree before Wilson's discovery was believed to be a native of Japan. The Parkman Crab, as the semidouble-flowered form is generally known in this country, was one of the first to reach the United States direct from Japan as it was sent to Boston in 1862 where it was first planted by Francis Parkman, the historian, in his

garden on the shores of Jamaica Pond. From this tree has been produced most of the plants of this Crabapple now growing in America and probably in Europe. The Parkman Crab is a small, vase-shaped tree with erect and spreading branches and dark bark. It flowers profusely every year and the flowers, which droop on slender stems, are rose red and unlike in color those of other Crabapples. The fruit, which is borne on long red stems is dull in color and hardly more than an eighth of an inch in diameter. When in bloom the Parkman Crab is one of the handsomest and most distinct of all Crabapples, and its small size makes it one of the best for small gardens.

Malus theifera, discovered by Wilson in central and western China, gives every promise of being a decorative plant of the first class in this country. It is a tree with long, upright, irregularly spreading, zigzag branches thickly studded with short spurs which bear numerous clusters of flowers which are rose red in the bud and become pale or almost white when the petals are fully expanded. In central China the peasants prepare from them their "red tea." The largest plants in the Arboretum flower profusely every year. There is a variety (var. *rosea*) with deeper-colored petals also in the collection.

Malus prunifolia rinki is an interesting tree, for this is the Apple cultivated by the Chinese and from China taken to Japan where it was the only Apple cultivated as a fruit tree before the advent of American apples. The wild type of this tree discovered by Wilson in western China is also growing in the Arboretum.

Malus floribunda. By many persons this is considered when in bloom the most beautiful of Crabapples. It was introduced into Europe by von Siebold in 1853 from Nagasaki, Japan. The place where this tree grows wild still remains unknown, although possibly it is one of the high mountains of Kyushu. Japanese botanists and nurserymen have confused it with the Parkman Crab, and Wilson did not find it in Japanese gardens. It is a broad, round-topped, treelike shrub sometimes twenty-five feet tall with stout branches and slender, arching, pendant branchlets. The clusters of flowers are white when fully expanded and are rose red in the bud, and as they open in succession the two colors make a handsome contrast. The fruit is about the size of a pea, yellowish or yellowish brown; from some plants it falls in the early autumn and on others it remains on the branches during the winter or until devoured by birds who find it one of the most palatable winter foods. *M. floribunda* rarely fails to produce abundant crops of flowers and in this climate has proved to be one of the most satisfactory of all ornamental shrubs or small trees which have been planted in eastern Massachusetts. A hybrid between *M. floribunda* and probably *M. robusta* appeared in the Arboretum with a lot of seedlings of *M. floribunda* in 1883 and has been named *M. arnoldiana*. It has the habit and abundant flowers of that species but the flowers and fruit are nearly twice as large as those of *M. floribunda*. It is a handsomer plant distinguished by its long arching branches and one of the handsomest Crabapples in the Arboretum.

Malus spectabilis is said to have been cultivated by the Chinese from time immemorial. Like several of the other Asiatic Crabapples it is not known in a wild state, but is probably of hybrid origin. It is a tree from twenty-five to thirty feet tall with a wide vase-shaped crown and short branchlets. The flowers are pale pink, more or less semi-double and fragrant. The fruit is pale yellow, subglobose and about three-quarters of an inch in diameter. *M. spectabilis* is a perfectly hardy and free-flowering plant, and well worth a place in gardens where space can be allowed for its development. What is probably a hybrid of *M. spectabilis* and some unknown species, possibly *M. micromalus*, is *M. Scheideckeri* and is also worth a place in a collection of these trees.

Early Flowering Viburnums. *Viburnum alnifolium*, the Hobble Bush or Moosewood of cold northern woods, one of the handsomest of the American species, is now in bloom, as is *Viburnum Carlesii*, one of the hardiest and most beautiful shrubs which the gardens of America have obtained from eastern Asia. It is a dwarf, compact shrub with white flowers in small globose clusters which open from rose-colored buds and are delightfully fragrant. Fortunately it has at last been taken up by American nurserymen and can now be obtained by lovers of beautiful plants.

Double-flowered Japanese Cherries. There are now growing in the Arboretum thirty-two double-flowered forms of *Prunus Lannesiana* and eighteen forms of *Prunus serrulata sachalinensis*. These are arranged on the southern slope of Bussey Hill and the handsomest of them are the following forms of *Prunus serrulata sachalinensis*: *Albo-rosea*, *Fugenzo*, *Sekiyama*, *Kirin*, *Horinji*, and *Hisakura*. The best six double-flowered forms of *Prunus Lannesiana* are, *Jonioi*, *Miyako*, *Sirotae*, *Amanogawa*, *Ojochin*, and *Ochichima*.

Early Azaleas. Two or three of the early Azaleas are beginning to open their flowers and during the next week *Rhododendron* (*Azalea*) *Schlippenbachii* will have opened its pale pink flowers which are about three inches in diameter and are marked with red-brown spots, and are perhaps more beautiful than those of any other Azalea which has proved hardy in the Arboretum. It is one of the commonest shrubs in Korea and often forms the dominant undergrowth in open woods. This plant grows further north than any other Azalea with the exception of the North American *Rhodora*, and there is no reason why it should not flourish in the colder parts of New England. Two flowering plants can be seen on Bussey Hill on the upper side of Azalea Path. Still rare in gardens it seems safe to predict that the time is not far distant when this inhabitant of the Diamond Mountains will be one of the chief ornaments of American gardens during the early days of May.